

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information retrieval apparatus for performing information retrieval from an information source, said information retrieval apparatus comprising:

input means in which a selectively inputting operation is performed;

database-access-interface means which accesses a database as said information source for the information retrieval in response to the use of said input means;

display means for displaying, in the form of a bar, information which is obtained by the accessing of said database;

cursor moving means for moving a cursor in response to the use of said input means in order to designate a position in the lengthwise direction of the information bar displayed on said display means; and

retrieval means for retrieving information corresponding to the designated lengthwise position from said database by using said database-access-interface means;

wherein the retrieved information is displayed on said display means.

2. An information retrieval apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein:

the lengthwise sections of the displayed information bar each have index-item information; and

said display means displays the index-item information corresponding to one lengthwise section in which the position in the lengthwise direction of the displayed information bar is designated by using said cursor.

3. An information retrieval apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said database-access-interface means accesses a built-in database of said information retrieval apparatus.

4. An information retrieval apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said database-access-interface means accesses a database outside said information retrieval apparatus.

5. An information retrieval apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said database-access-interface means uses a network to access a database outside said information retrieval apparatus.

6. An information retrieval method for performing information retrieval from an information source, said information retrieval method comprising:

an input step in which a selectively inputting operation is performed;

a display step for displaying information in the form of a bar on display means, the displayed information being obtained by using database-access-interface means to access a database as said information source for information retrieval in response to the execution of said input step;

a cursor moving step for moving a cursor in response to the execution of said input step in order to designate a position in the lengthwise direction of the displayed information bar; and

a retrieval step for retrieving information corresponding to the designated position from said database by using said database-access-interface means;

wherein the retrieved information is displayed on said display means.

7. An information retrieval method according to Claim 6, wherein:

the lengthwise sections of the displayed information bar each have index-item information; and

in said display step, said display means displays the index-item information corresponding to one lengthwise section in which the position in the lengthwise direction of the displayed information bar is designated by using said

cursor.

8. An information retrieval method according to Claim 6, wherein said database-access-interface means accesses a built-in database of an apparatus in which said information retrieval method is performed.

9. An information retrieval method according to Claim 6, wherein said database-access-interface means accesses a database outside an apparatus in which said information retrieval method is performed.

10. An information retrieval method according to Claim 6, wherein said database-access-interface means uses a network to access a database outside an apparatus in which said information retrieval method is performed.